Running head: POST ABORTION SYNDROME

Research Paper

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ABSTRACT

This paper is about Post Abortion Syndrome (PAS) and as it relates to experiences by women, who had an abortion(s) and possible syndromes that may occur post abortively. Also addressed is the connectivity of PAS with Post Traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD). A list of syndromes and information and testimonies are given of the affects and emotions with the post abortive mother, the father, family members, nurses, and others who may have participated in the abortion. There is insight as to the reactions and responses from the fathers of the aborted babies, and the involvement of sexual relations post abortively. Statics are given from when abortions began to prevail and the number of baby lives that have been aborted. Biblical reference and empirical information are the sources, and they are intertwined to give and tell the fate of the post abortive mother(s) and others.

*Introduction*

Post-Abortion Syndrome (PAS) is a term used to describe a wide range of symptomsthat are intimately related to, and expressions of, a previous abortion experience (Louisiana Right to Life (LRTL), 2008). The process of making an abortion choice, experiencing the procedure and living with the grief, pain and regret is certainly, at its very core, traumatic (Ramah International (RI), 2009). Many believe PAS is a form of Post Traumatic Stress Syndrome (PTSD). PTSD is the result of having suffered an event so stressful and so traumatic that the person is taken beyond his/her ability to cope in a normal manner. Victims of PTSD are unable to simply resume their lives where they left off before the traumatic event (LRTL, 2008). Some authors have projected that 10% of women who experience a spontaneous abortion meet criteria for acute stress disorder and 1% for posttraumatic stress disorder (Bowles, Bernard, Epperly, 2008).

As with any trauma, individuals often try to "forget" the ordeal and deny or ignore any pain that may result (RI, 2009). Instead they experience a variety of reactions that do not go away merely with the passage of time. Many simply don't relate their distress to the abortion experience. At some point, however, memories resurface and the truth of this loss can no longer be denied. During these moments, the pain of post-abortion syndrome reveals itself in the hearts of millions of lives (RI, 2009). The symptoms of post abortion syndrome will not necessarily appear at the same time, nor is likely that any woman will experience all the symptoms. Some may occur immediately after an abortion and others much later. If you can identify with more than two of these symptoms, it could be that you are experiencing post-abortion syndrome. Although the symptoms of PTSD (and PAS) are varied and may not surface for years after the trauma, they are nonetheless real and should be considered (LRTL, 2008).

*Symptoms*

The post-abortive mother is left with feelings of overwhelming grief and guilt that she has stifled for many years. The pain can encompass the heart and until this lost child is properly mourned, peace is a distant concept (RI, 2009). Some of the symptoms of post-abortion syndrome, given by LRTL are: (1)Guilt and anxiety. Guilt is what an individual feels when she has violated her own moral code.For the woman who has come to believe, at some point either before or after the abortion, that she consented to the killing of her unborn child, the burden of guilt is relentless; (2) Psychological "numbing." Many post-abortive women work hard to keep their emotions in tight check, preventing themselves from feeling the pain of what has happened, but also greatly hampering their ability to form and maintain close relationships. Previous research indicates that abortion increases risk for experiencing difficulties maintaining committed relationships, sexual dysfunction, and psychological problems (Coleman, Rue, Spence, 2008); (3) depression and thoughts of suicide**.** All of us experience depression from time to time, but not the severity of sad moods, sudden and uncontrollable crying episodes, deterioration of self-concept, reduced motivation for the normal activities of life, disruption in interpersonal relationships, or thoughts of suicide or preoccupation with death; (4) anniversary syndrome and re-experiencing the abortion; (5) preoccupation with becoming pregnant again and anxiety over fertility and childbearing issues. A common post abortion syndrome symptom in women is a fear that they will never again become pregnant or be able to carry a pregnancy to term Many refer to these fears as punishments from God; (6) survival guilt and interruption of the bonding process with present and/or future children. While the abortion frees them from their current trauma, it frequently produces in them an unrelenting guilt for choosing their own comfort over the life of the child; (7) development of eating disorders and alcohol and drug abuse. These often serve initially as a form of self-medication--a way of coping with the pain of the abortion memories; (8) other self-punishing or self-degrading behaviors. The post-abortive woman may also enter in abusive relationships, become promiscuous, and fail to take care of herself medically or deliberately hurt herself emotionally and/or physically; and (9) brief reactive psychosis. While this is an unusual reaction to abortion, it bears mentioning only because it is possible for a person to have a brief psychotic reaction to a stressful event without being labeled a psychotic individual. Research investigation and clinical experiences with American women suggest that some women experience symptoms that have thoughts of a long ago abortion as a factor, yet the association may be undetected for some time (Trybulski, 2006)**.**

*Others affected by Abortion*

Post abortion trauma affects more than the baby's mother: fathers, grandparents, siblings of the baby, siblings of the mother, and others (RI, 2009). Include 20 million men and then add the grandparents and siblings and you come up with potentially 200 million individuals in the US alone who could be touched by post abortion outreach efforts (RI, 2009). While less is known about the emotional impact of abortion on fathers, the main difference between men and women is that the woman physically experiences the abortion. As a result, the stress can be varied depending upon the father's involvement in the decision. A study was done to increase knowledge about reactions and reflections by means of a prospective study of men's attitudes and feelings towards abortion. Nearly all of the men were happy with the women's decision to have an abortion at both follow-ups. They experienced the abortion as a relief and a responsible act. Simultaneously, abortion could also be experienced as a painful and ethically problematic act. Overall, most men had only positive experiences post- abortion, such as a feeling of maturity. More than half of those who accompanied their partners to the hospital felt that the staff did not have a welcoming attitude (Kero, 2004). Jones, 2006, stated that College students' attitudes concerning male involvement in the abortion decision-making process were investigated. A test supported Jones’ first hypothesis that no significant difference exists between males and females regarding levels of male involvement. A Regression result was indicated.

RI, 2009, states that individuals who have just discovered that an abortion has occurred in their family, some are overwhelmed with shock. They too are left with various emotions that include grief, anger, frustration, and helplessness**. Individuals who participated in the abortion decision** later testify that the blood of that baby was forever on their hands. There is devastation when people finally realize their sin is monumental. [Leviticus 20:4](http://bibleresources.bible.com/passagesearchresults.php?passage1=Leviticus+20:4&version=9)-5 states, “And if the people of the land do any ways hide their eyes from the man, when he gives of his seed unto Molech, and kill him not: Then I will set my face against that man, and against his family, and will cut him off, and all that go a whoring after him, to commit whoredom with Molech, from among their people. A study was designed to bridge prior studies of occupational moral distress with future clinical investigations of moral distress. A modified phenomenological study of nurses' experience of a particular moral issue was conducted. Five properties of the lived experience of moral distress were identified: perception, pain, valuing, altered participation, and perspective. Three types of moral distress identified in this study were: shocked, muted, and suppressed (persistent). Type of moral distress was related to situational conditions, recognition of moral ends, quality of coping processes, and temporal breadth. Negative outcomes of moral distress, which probably exist, were undetectable with this study design (Hanna, D., 2005).

Everyone is touched by abortion, whether they know it or not. Many women entering jail or prison are pregnant, and correctional facilities are therefore an important venue for providing a range of pregnancy-related care, including access to abortion services. However, the availability of abortion services to inmates in the United States is unknown. Although incarceration does not preclude women’s need for access to abortion, full access to services is not available in all settings (Sufrin, Creinin, Chang, 2009). As for me, while a young teenager, my mother brought me for an abortion. I remember being lead “like a sheep to the slaughter.” I was a young, ignorant and bewildered, and without the proper teaching or guidance. What was I going to do with a baby and how were I going to finance a baby and myself, without my mother’s assistance? I no longer hold un-forgiveness towards my mother. I do believe, however, that her action and the abortion set off a “spirit of murder” and a pattern or mold, for a generation curse. I also remembered how my mother always bragged that she would stop smoking every time she became pregnant, because she wanted a healthy baby. She was a teenager during 2-3 pregnancies, and out of six children, she never aborted one. I believe she was a “pro-lifer”, and so am I. Years later, as this all played back in my mind, I wish I could have had the thoughts of protecting my babies as she did. I wish it never happened. I have always paralleled this scenario with the biblical scenario of Jacob and his mother. Though she contrived everything, Jacob was held accountable and had to reap. Even so, I grieved, repented, asked forgiveness, and I believe I was forgiven. This is what the Lord says - “restrain your voice from weeping and your eyes from tears. For your work will be rewarded. Your children will return from the land of the enemy” (Jeremiah 31:16). Wainer, 2008, states that abortion was the sensible next step in managing a missed menstrual period, the back up when contraception or plans for love and marriage failed. Women took mothering seriously and had an abortion to avoid becoming inadequate mothers.

*Method*

A national poll found that at least 56% of women experience a sense of guilt over their decision. In a survey, some 54% of post-abortive women report an increase of post-abortion syndrome symptoms around the time of the anniversary of the abortion and/or the due date of the aborted child. Firstly, a five-year study shows that 25% of women who have had abortions sought out psychiatric care, versus just 3% of women who have not had abortions. Secondly, numerous studies reveal that women who have had an abortion have a high incidence of depression, stress, low self-esteem, suicidal feelings and substance abuse. Thirdly, Dr. Anne Speckhard, in a 1985 University of Minnesota study, researched "long-term manifestations of abortion" (5-10 years), and found that 81% of mothers reported preoccupation with their aborted child, 54% had nightmares, 35% had perceived visitations their child, and 96% felt their abortion had taken a human life.

Quantitative investigations indicate that women who have had abortions score have high scores on instruments measuring avoidance and intrusion. The experience of abortion as an unending event, within women’s thoughts and emotions, that continues to evolve new insights and meaning. Thoughts about past abortions are triggered during subsequent pregnancies, when abortion is in the news, or with friend’s life events. Past experiences are stored in the background of consciousness in primordial form and are shaped and completed during future events. Coleman, 2006, states that adolescents who aborted an unwanted pregnancy were more inclined than adolescents who delivered to seek psychological counseling and they reported more frequent problems sleeping and more frequent marijuana use. The information derived from this study is potentially useful to parents and professionals who provide guidance to adolescents regarding pregnancy resolution. Fergusson, Boden, Joseph, and Horwood, 2007, stated that compared with young women who became pregnant before age 21 but did not seek an abortion, young women who had an abortion had significantly better outcomes on six out of 10 measures spanning education, income, welfare dependence and domestic violence. Adjustment for confounding factors indicated that most of these differences were explained by family, social and educational characteristics that were present prior to pregnancy.

A pollster acknowledged that many women will not even admit having had an abortion. Jones, 2007, states, underreporting of induced abortions in surveys is widespread, both in countries where the procedure is illegal or highly restricted and in those where it is legal. In this study, we find that fewer than one half of induced abortions performed in the United States in 1997-2001 (47 percent) were reported by women during face-to-face interviews in the 2002 National Survey of Family Growth (NSFG). Hispanic and black women and those with low income were among the least likely to report their experience of abortion. Women were also less likely to report abortions that occurred when they were in their 20s. Goodwin, Ogden, 2007 states that women's responses to their abortion do not always follow the suggested reactions of grief, but are varied and located within both the personal and social context. A study was done by Kero, Lalos, 2004, to increase knowledge about reactions and reflections by means of a prospective study of men's attitudes and feelings towards abortion. Nearly all of the men were happy with the women's decision to have an abortion at both follow-ups. They experienced the abortion as a relief and a responsible act. Simultaneously, abortion could also be experienced as a painful and ethically problematic act. Overall, most men had only positive experiences post- abortion, such as a feeling of maturity. More than half of those who accompanied their partners to the hospital felt that the staff did not have a welcoming attitude.

Prochoice advocates of the National Abortion Federation (NAF), 2009, states that many people are interested in learning about the possible effects of abortion on women's emotional well-being, and several hundred studies have been conducted on this issue since the late 1970s. Unfortunately, much of the research on women's psychological responses to abortion can be confusing. Nonetheless, mainstream medical opinions, like that of the American Psychological Association, agree there is no such thing as "post-abortion syndrome" (prochoice.org, 2009).

*Results*

The post-abortive woman can be found in nearly every race, religion, culture, correctional facility, income-bracket, or age range. Society is completely permeated with their ranks. They are everywhere: churches, shopping centers, grocery stores, at the top of the corporate ladder. They are high school dropouts and high school graduates. They have Bachelor degrees, Masters, and Ph.D. degrees. They work in daycare centers, well below their level of capability, at the top level of corporations and governments - working around the clock to prove that “we made the right choice" (RI, 2009). “And they built the high places of Baal, …to cause their sons and their daughters to pass through the fire unto Molech; which I commanded them not, neither came it into my mind, that they should do this abomination, to cause…to sin” ([Jeremiah 32:35](http://bibleresources.bible.com/passagesearchresults.php?passage1=Jeremiah+32:35&version=9)). They aborted for the sake of a career; yet few know them personally because they normally refuse to allow people to be their close friends for fear they might find out “the secret” (RI, 2009)**.** Social science theory about deviance, social stigma and norm violation was used to inform a study. The abortion was in part an action taken to preserve their persona as competent, moral beings capable of taking care of themselves. These women took mothering seriously and had an abortion to avoid becoming inadequate mothers. The working class women had histories of managing tough and challenging life events, and they used the strengths, skills and networks they had established and applied those to the abortion decision (Wainer, 2008). This appears to be in contrast to the working, managing, tough woman in Proverbs 31. She too was challenged with life events. However, it does not appear, or have the spirit behind it, of her possibly making the decision to abort her baby.

Eventually, after the denial is broken with the truth that the woman aborted a fully formed baby, a post-abortive individual will face the truth that she lost a child and begins to grieve (RI, 2009). This is the point where Jeremiah 31: 16 comes into play - “...Rachel weeping for her children and refusing to be comforted because her children are no more." Immediately after an abortion, many women report a feeling of relief, but guilt and depression frequently follow. Some women said they had no regrets for that time (Trybulski, 2006). Trybulski, 2006, states, women spoke about thinking of their abortion(s) at varied times. The abortion(s) was/were not a time-limited event; instead thoughts, emotions, and insights about the meaning of these experiences were on-going, as life events unfolded. The past reached into the present in varied ways and at unplanned times. Difficulties with subsequent pregnancies, life milestones, and mundane occurrences involving friends' children were common triggers for recurring thoughts about past abortions. These recurrent thoughts had characteristics of avoidance or suppression and intrusion. Trybulski, 2006, states that qualitative investigation shows that women readily recall detailed circumstances and feelings about their abortions, indicating that for many women, thoughts about their abortion experience may recur or be easily prompted to recur. Several investigations with two different samples of Russian women and one sample of Norwegian women were used: standardized psychological tests to measure women’s responses to their past abortion experiences. Results from many women in these three culturally different samples indicate that women have recurrent thoughts they may suppress or find intrusive, as well as thoughts that re-experience their abortion (Speckhard & Mufel 2003, Rue et al. 2004, Broen et al. 2005). Trybulski, 2006, states that results from previous studies indicate that women have thoughts about their abortion that they suppress or find intrusive. “For a certain amount of time, we can convince ourselves that we lost a ‘blob of tissue’ in the abortion and not an actual child” (RI, 2009). Information channels can destroy this myth and bring the reality of the abortion home in an undeniable way.

“Society is not going to punish us. We punish ourselves with self-destructive habits and abusive relationships.” “Years later something snaps and we can no longer bear the burden of our sin. We confess; perhaps tentatively, carefully, cautiously, discreetly, prudently to a friend, a loved one, a boyfriend, a husband or a lover, ‘the pain’” (RI, 2009). In their study, Coleman, Rue, Spence, 2008, states that among women, abortion was associated with more positive attitudes toward sex with strangers and with being forced to have sex; whereas the male experience of a partner abortion was correlated with attitudes endorsing sex with more than one partner and with strangers. Abortion among men and women predicted disagreement relative to restricting sexual activity to love relations, more sex partners in the last year, and endorsement for having sex with an acquaintance.

Sedgh, Henshaw, Singh, et al, 2007 states statistics on legal abortions in 2003 were compiled for 60 countries in which the procedure is broadly legal. Ramah International, 2009, reports that statistics for the United States show that 43% of women will have an abortion. It is a fact that at least 40 million abortions have occurred since 1973. Considering the multiple abortion possibility, 44% of all post-abortive women will have multiple abortions. Guttmacher, 2008, reports that in the United States, nearly half of pregnancies among American women are unintended, and four in 10 of these are terminated by abortion, and that twenty-two percent of all pregnancies (excluding miscarriages) end in abortion. Fisher, Singh, Shuper, et al, 2005, states that a total of 68.2%, 23.1 % and 8.7% of the women were seeking a first, second, or third or subsequent abortion respectively. The combination of mifepristone and misoprostol is an established method for induction of early first trimester abortion, but there is no consensus about the best evaluation of treatment outcome. We assessed endometrial thickness, determined by ultrasound and serum-human chorionic gonadotropin (s-hCG) as markers of successful management. A decrease of 99% in s-hCG levels was noted in 99% of the women, when levels determined prior to mifepristone intake and those measured 15-71 days post-abortion were compared. The study confirms that s-hCG levels drop sharply after medical abortion (Parashar, Iversen, Midbøe, 2007). To evaluate the incidence of structural uterine anomalies (SUAs) in women with habitual abortion (HA) as diagnosed by means of hysteroscopy and to study hysteroscopy's therapeutic potential with regard to that pathology. SUAs were detected in nearly half of the patients with HA. After appropriate treatment when applicable, 78% of patients with SUAs achieved a successful ongoing pregnancy (Dendrinos, Grigoriou, Sakkas, 2008).

*Discussion*

Herewith, it appears to be and can definitely be said that the abortion experience is the root of all the above stated issues and symptoms of PAS and PTSD. Hess, Justin, 2004, states that Democrats reported stronger pro-choice views than Republicans did, and similarly, Liberals were more pro-choice oriented than Conservatives. It appears to me that Pro-Lifers would be more inclined to believe that PAS and PTSD is real and true, since Pro-Choicers do not share conservative views. The following Biblical verses are what I believe is the mentality of Pro-choicers: “Because that, when they knew God, they glorified him not as God, neither were thankful; but became vain in their imaginations, and their foolish heart was darkened. Professing them-selves to be wise, they became fools, and changed the glory of the un-corruptible God into an image made like to corruptible man, and to birds, and four-footed beasts, and creeping things. Wherefore God also gave them up to uncleanness through the lusts of their own hearts, to dishonor their own bodies between themselves: who changed the truth of God into a lie, and worshipped and served the creature more than the Creator, who is blessed forever. Amen “(Romans 1:22-25, KJV).

The above mentioned information and results, gives plenty evidence to support that PAS and PTSD are real and true. The information has been given scientifically, scholarly, empirically, and spiritually. I believe, by experience, that PAS and PTSD are real and true. There are too many people, lives, marriages and families who have been destroyed as a result of PAS, PTSD, and abortion. I am very sorry that I was a contributor of the transgression of abortion. [Hosea 4:6](http://bibleresources.bible.com/passagesearchresults.php?passage1=Hosea+4:6&version=9) states “My people are destroyed for lack of knowledge: because thou hast rejected knowledge, I will also reject thee, that thou shall be no priest to me: seeing thou hast forgotten the law of thy God, I will also forget thy children. Therefore, this tells me, that in order to reverse any cures, women and men who have to repent. Second [Chronicles 7:14](http://bibleresources.bible.com/passagesearchresults.php?passage1=2%20Chronicles+7:14&version=9) states, “If my people, which are called by my name, shall humble themselves, and pray, and seek my face, and turn from their wicked ways; then will I hear from heaven, and will forgive their sin, and will heal their land.”

There is little consolation to offer the woman who has transgressed one of nature's strongest instincts: the protection a mother extends to her young (RI, 2009). In fact, many post-abortive women believe that any unhappy events that have occurred since the abortion were inevitable because they "deserve it" (RI, 2009). RI, 2009, states that many post-abortive women have also been speaking out publicly about their own abortion experiences and the subsequent healing process. Also, except for a handful of small ministry efforts offered through our nation's 3,200 crisis pregnancy centers and direct ministries, little is being done to reach the hearts of post-abortive women, with forgiveness and healing comfort available through Jesus Christ. Trybulski, 2006, states that Providers of women's healthcare services must reflect about ways to reassure women of the common nature of recurrent thoughts and the spectrum of emotional responses that, even years later, is normal

Abortion may mitigate some effects of early unplanned pregnancy. However, further study of its potential risks and benefits is needed so that women can make fully informed decisions as to whether to terminate unintended pregnancies (Fergusson, Boden, Joseph, and Horwood, 2007). [Leviticus 18:21](http://bibleresources.bible.com/passagesearchresults.php?passage1=Leviticus+18:21&version=9) states “And thou shall not let any of thy seed pass through the fire to Molech, neither shall thou profane the name of thy God: I am the LORD,” and [Leviticus 20:2](http://bibleresources.bible.com/passagesearchresults.php?passage1=Leviticus+20:2&version=9) states “Again, thou shall say to the children of Israel, Whosoever he be of the children of Israel, or of the strangers that sojourn in Israel, that gives any of his seed unto Molech; he shall surely be put to death: the people of the land shall stone him with stones.”

*Conclusion*

Most investigations of long-term responses to abortion have occurred within two years of the procedure, and therefore the long-term feelings and emotions that characterize women’s abortion experiences remain largely uninvestigated. Trybulski, 2006, states that most studies of post abortion responses do not portray what women experience over an extended time period, since many only use a 24 month follow-up period. There are now just 275 million folks living in the U.S. When you take this vision to the world, this number can be increased to easily one billion people. [Habakkuk 2:2](http://bibleresources.bible.com/passagesearchresults.php?passage1=Habakkuk+2:2&version=9) states “And the LORD answered me, and said, Write the vision, and make it plain upon tables, that he may run that reads it. Jones, 2007, states subsequent research should explore strategies to improve information collected on abortion and, in the interim, research involving pregnancy outcomes should be adjusted for unreported induced abortions. [James 1:5](http://bibleresources.bible.com/passagesearchresults.php?passage1=James+1:5&version=9) If any of you lack wisdom, let him ask of God, who gives to all men liberally, and upbraids not; and it shall be given him; [John 5:39](http://bibleresources.bible.com/passagesearchresults.php?passage1=John+5:39&version=9) states “Search the scriptures; for in them ye think ye have eternal life: and they are they which testify of me;” [Acts 17:11](http://bibleresources.bible.com/passagesearchresults.php?passage1=Acts+17:11&version=9) states “These were more noble than those in Thessalonica, in that they received the word with all readiness of mind, and searched the scriptures daily, whether those things were so;” and [Deuteronomy 30:19](http://bibleresources.bible.com/passagesearchresults.php?passage1=Deuteronomy+30:19&version=9) states “I call heaven and earth to record this day against you, that I have set before you life and death, blessing and cursing: therefore choose life, that both thou and thy seed may live.”

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